RTP PREPARATION

IV. POLICY ELEMENT

The Policy Element

To assure consistency between all Regional Transportation Plans in California, the State legislature requires the same planning components for each plan. One of the major components required in all plans is the "Policy Element". Statutes state that each RTP shall (Government Code 65080 (b)) include a Policy Element that: (1) describes the transportation issues in the region, (2) identifies and quantifies regional needs expressed within both a short and long-range framework; and (3) maintains internal consistency with the Financial Element fund estimates.

The purpose of the Policy Element is to address legislative, planning, financial, and institutional issues and requirements, as well as any areas of regional consensus (e.g. land use policies). The Policy Element presents guidance to decision-makers of the implications, impacts, opportunities, and foreclosed options that will result from implementation of the RTP. Moreover, the Policy Element is a resource for providing input and promoting consistency of action among state, regional, and local agencies including; transit agencies, congestion management agencies, Employment Development Departments, the California Highway Patrol, private industry councils, Tribal Governments, etc.

The Policy Element is required to have the following three distinct components;

Goals: Goals are end results toward which effort is directed. They are expressed in general terms

and are timeless.

Policies: Policies are direction statements that guide future decisions with specific actions.

Objectives: Objectives are the results to be achieved by an identified point in time. They are capable

of being quantified and realistically attained considering probable funding and political

constraints.

Legislation requires that the objectives shall (Government Code 65080(b)(1)) be linked to short-range and long-range transportation implementation goals. Each objective should be consistent with the needs identified in the RTP as a means of strengthening the linkage between statewide system planning and ultimate project implementation.

The Policy Element should clearly convey the transportation policies of the region. As part of this Element, the discussion should; (1) relay how these policies were developed, (2) identify any significant changes in the policies from the previous plans and (3) provide the reasons for any changes in policies from previous plans. Specific policy issues that should be considered are listed in Appendix D, Policy Considerations pages D–5, 6.

The RTPs of MPOs with an urbanized population greater than 200,000 in serious, severe or extreme ozone nonattainment areas or in serious CO nonattainment have additional planning requirements. These MPOs shall (Title 40, CFR Sec. 93.106) identify the attainment years and have a maximum of 10 years between years for which the system is described. As part of this requirement, the plan shall describe the proposed transportation system for the last year of the plan. The plan shall also document the planning factors for those years and, as required by Title 40, CFR Sec. 93.106, include the level of detail needed.